

All Saints' Church,
New York City.
New York Co

HABS No. 4-10

HABS
NY,
31-NEYO,
14-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District No. 4
Southern New York State

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Wm. Dewey Foster, District Officer,
25 West 45th Street, New York City.

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH
286-290 Henry Street, New York City.
 (at the South East Corner of Scammel Street, City)

HABS
 NY,
 31-NEYO,
 14-

Location and Date

The religious work of All Saints' Protestant Episcopal Church was commenced in private houses "by several seminar-ians" in 1819. The parish was definitely organized by the election of wardens and vestrymen on May 27, 1824. (N. Y. Eve. Post, May 29, 1824), the Rev. Wm. Atwater Clark, D.D., being the first rector. A small wooden chapel was built for temporary use in Grand Street near Pitt Street and the diagonal intersection of Grand, with the east end of Division Street. (C. Hardie, Description Of The City Of New York, 1827, p. 178) In three years it proved inadequate. Land for the present building, two blocks south, was conveyed to the Church by Moses and Esther Leon on September 28, 1827. (Libre 226 of Deeds, p. 441.) This was made possible with the aid of an annual allowance of \$600, from July 30, 1827, to December 12, 1842, totaling \$9,000, granted by Trinity Church. (Dix, History of Trinity Church, IV: 549.)

The cornerstone of the new edifice was laid on Henry Street at the southeast corner of Scammel Street by the Right Rev. John Henry Hobart, D.D., Bishop of New York, on October 3, 1827. (N. Y. Eve. Post, October 2, 1827.) This substantial stone church was consecrated by the same Bishop on June 5, 1828, and opened for worship. (Greenleaf, History of the Churches of New York, 1846, pp. 85-86.)

Architectural Features

The outer walls of the church are constructed of rubble-

stone. The brick arches at the windows and brick trim or quoins at their sides give color to the drab exterior.

The short square stone tower, which stands above the second story at the front of the building, was originally terminated by a balustrade having corner posts and central posts on each side. A frame addition to the tower was built in 1881, the lower portion of which was covered with slate, and the upper portion -- a short turret with arched openings, roofed with a composition paper.

The roof covering of the church was originally shingles, but this has been covered with tar and over that with a composition roofing material.

The windows all had originally the triple-hung sash which still appears in the window at the north corner of the east elevation. At some later date, leaded glass, fixed throughout, was substituted at the other windows. When this change was made, the heads of the windows on the inside were rounded, but outside the pointed arches with their brick trim were left unchanged.

The trim of the doors which lead into the entrance vestibule is unusually heavy; as is also that of the doors from the stair-hall into the auditorium.

The drawings show the stairs to the slave galleries. There are two of these galleries, one in the northeast and one in the northwest corner of the building, above the stair-halls. As one looks up from the chancel, only the panelling which covers the fronts of these galleries is seen. This panelling was originally fixed, as it still is in the north-

east gallery, but in the northwest gallery it has been hinged, evidently at a recent date. The purpose of this covering was probably to conceal the slaves from view, although permitting the sound of the service and sermon to be heard.

A most notable feature of the interior of the Church is the 200-year-old "wineglass" pulpit which All Saints' received in 1860 from St. John's Church on Varick Street and which the latter had received from England. When old St. John's was demolished in 1918 (see Stokes's Iconography, V: 2072), the sounding-board with the carved plume at the top was recovered from the ruins. This too was given to All Saints' and the restored pulpit with its sounding-board was unveiled on May 27, 1921. (From correspondence of the Rev. Kenneth F. Guthrie, then Vicar, who conducted the ceremony.)

Historical Features

When those earliest efforts to maintain Protestant Episcopal services in that part of Manhattan Island began in 1819, few streets had been cut through the eastern section of the old DeLancey and Rutgers Farmlands which extended from the Bowery Road almost to Corlear's Hook. Both the church sites -- the eminence (Mount Pitt) on which the wooden chapel was built, and the site of the present church -- had been covered during the Revolution by an irregular line of fortified earthworks. (Stokes's Iconography, the Landmark Map, Plate 175, Vol. III.)

"The Church was built for the well-to-do shipowners and traders living in East Broadway and Grand Street. The slave

galleries, remaining to the present, are an evidence of the prosperity of the early parishioners. Slavery was legal in New York State at that time, and at the time the Church was built." (Statement contained in small folder issued by the Church.) This last sentence is not strictly correct. The law abolishing slavery in New York State went into effect July 4, 1827. (Stokes's Iconography, Chronology under that date, Vol. V.) Many negroes, however, doubtless remained with families where they once were slaves.

During the first ten years the parish rapidly changed from the suburban to the metropolitan character; and although there are sittings in the church for more than one thousand persons, "the Church gathered from highway, lane and alley, until within these walls there was room for no more." (Jubilee Sermon of the Rev. Wm. N. Dunnell, D.D., Rector, May 27, 1874.)

The first daily Lenten service ever held in the United States was maintained in this Church during the rectorship of the Rev. Benj. I. Haight, D.D., which lasted from 1837 until 1846. (Ibid.) During his incumbency, also, the building now used as the Rectory at 292 Henry Street was built. It was first used as a school, but in 1881 was altered into a residence. In that year also, the robing-room was built. Trinity Church added loans, donations, grants and annual allowances to December, 1846, making a grand total of \$31,500. (Dix, cited above.) So the work went on.

During the next eleven years, when the Rev. Wm. E. Eigenbrodt, D.D., was Rector (to 1857) the Church edifice was

improved in 1850 by the addition of the recessed chancel; and the baptismal font was made, in part at least, from designs furnished by him, to supply the place of the baptismal ewer which had been stolen. (Jubilee Sermon, above cited.)

When the Rev. Edw. O. Flagg, D.D., succeeded him in 1858, that "current of change" which had set in and which "has swept away so much of the lower wards," had reached its full. The question arose whether the Church "must follow its migrating people." The "withdrawal of material support was sorely and increasingly felt." (Ibid.)

Three rectors ministered in turn to the spiritual needs of the Church until the Rev. Dr. Dunnell took charge in 1871. In that year, Trinity again relieved the financial burden. An annual grant of money was given on condition that sittings in the Church would be free.

A great influx of foreigners followed the potato famine in Ireland, and it almost "obliterated the lines and landmarks of old Knickerbocker life." Then followed "another wave, induced by the persecutions of Jews in Russia, Poland, and other European governments and peoples, --- a wave that flowed over and submerged this section, changing the tone, the feeling, the habits, the character, of the whole district, till one has aptly said that 'All Saints' Church is the Temple at Jerusalem.'" (From Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Dunnell on All Saints' Day, 1896.)

It is today the only Episcopal Church in the vast area south of Canal Street and east of the Bowery. "In its congregation are Italians, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Chinese,

American Indians, some who have been brought up in the Jewish faith, and many of our colored brethren." (From historical folder cited above.)

Written, April 17th, 1934, by

Thomas W. Hotchkiss

Thoman W. Hotchkiss,
118 Pine Street,
Peekskill, N.Y.

Approved:

Am. Bruey Foster